Guide to Posting Technical Questions to StackOverflow

We encourage anyone to ask & answer DSpace technical questions on StackOverflow!

DSpace developers encourage anyone to ask technical questions on StackOverflow using the "dspace" tag. StackOverflow is an excellent, free resource, and asking questions there gives us all the opportunity to hear answers from "experts" that are external to our DSpace community.

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Why ask technical questions on StackOverflow?

You are still more than welcome to continue to ask technical questions about DSpace on mailing lists (specifically dspace-tech and dspace-devel), or using one of the other options listed in our Support Guide.

DSpace Developers have noticed that it can sometimes be difficult to determine the "best answer" to a question on mailing lists (or even in the mailing list archives). While you may get an answer to your question, you may not be able to tell if others agree that is the "best answer", or if it's just one of several possible answers. There are some questions that are asked frequently, which we'd all like to be able to "just Google". StackOverflow helps to solve both of these problems, as questions and answers appear prominently in Google search results, and it allows all users to "vote up" the best answer to a specific question.

In addition, StackOverflow has a massive community of developers and system administrators (other "experts"), who may be able to answer your question even better than someone on a DSpace mailing list can. As a basic example, suppose you encounter issues with running DSpace on Tomcat behind an Apache web server. If you asked your question on StackOverflow, you may also find Tomcat and Apache experts answering your question or offering suggestions!

For even more information take a look at the StackOverflow Tour: https://stackoverflow.com/tour

Can any technical question be asked on StackOverflow?

No. StackOverflow.com is oriented primarily towards developer-related or administrative-related questions. Questions that are subjective in nature are also discouraged, as it is very difficult (or impossible) to determine the "best answer".

Here are some examples of DSpace questions which you could ask on StackOverflow:

- How do I customize the DSpace XMLUI so that the side menu is on the left side? (Or any sort of customization related question)
- How do I configure DSpace to connect to my local LDAP (or Shibboleth)?
- How do I get DSpace to run on port 80 instead of port 8080?
- I'm trying to add some custom code into my DSpace, and it's not working right. Here's a code snippet and the error I'm seeing: _____
- (*Most any other question regarding customizing or configuring/setting up your DSpace instance*)

Here are some examples of DSpace questions that are probably NOT on-topic for StackOverflow (Instead these types of questions can just be asked on our mailing lists):

- How have you tweaked your DSpace so that it scales better? (*Question is too subjective for StackOverflow, as there's not really a "right" answer to the question*)
- Do you have any recommendations for best Operating System for installing DSpace? (*Again, too subjective for StackOverflow.*)

For more information on what is considered "on-topic" for StackOverflow see: https://stackoverflow.com/help/on-topic

How do I ask a DSpace question on StackOverflow?

It's easy! Though first, we do recommend searching (https://stackoverflow.com/search) to see if your question has already been asked before.

1. Login/Signup on http://stackoverflow.com (You can use your Google or Facebook account if you wish.)
2. Click the big "Ask Question" button in the upper right.
3. Enter in your question. Give it a title and describe the question or problem. **MAKE SURE TO TAG IT "dspace"** (as this is the primary way that DSpace developers are notified of new DSpace related questions).
   a. Also remember to tag your question with other related topics (e.g. if it's related to Tomcat, tag it "tomcat" as well). That way you will alert other "experts" that your question is also related to other topic(s).
   b. For more tips on asking a good question, see: https://stackoverflow.com/help/how-to-ask

You may also answer your own questions!

StackOverflow also welcomes answering your own questions if you discover the answer, or already knew it but wanted to make it easier to find the answer publicly: https://stackoverflow.com/help/self-answer

How can I help answer DSpace questions on StackOverflow?

Again, it's easy!

1. Login/Signup on http://stackoverflow.com (You can use your Google or Facebook account if you wish.)
2. Visit the "dspace" tag (https://stackoverflow.com/questions/tagged/dspace).
   a. You may also subscribe to the "dspace" tag for email updates. See: http://blog.stackoverflow.com/2011/01/tag-favorites-and-tag-subscriptions/
3. Locate a question that you may be able to help with.
4. Type in your answer or suggestions. You can also obviously ask questions back to the submitter, if the question isn't clear.
   a. For more tips on writing a good answer, see: https://stackoverflow.com/help/how-to-answer